



4910-06-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

#### Notice of Availability of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the California High-Speed Train Project Fresno to Bakersfield Section

**AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), United States Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability

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**SUMMARY:** FRA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section of the California High-Speed Train (HST) Project (Project). FRA is the lead Federal agency and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is the lead state agency for the environmental review process. The Supplemental Draft EIS was prepared by FRA and the Authority to meet the federal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to serve as the Authority's Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with the state law requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is a Cooperating Agency for the Supplemental Draft EIS.

**DATES:** Written comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section should be provided to the Authority at the address listed below on or before September 20, 2012. Public hearings are scheduled on August 27, August 28, and August 29, 2012, at the times and dates listed in the Addresses Section below in Fresno, Hanford, and Bakersfield, CA.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS should be sent to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, EIR/EIS Comments, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814, or may be submitted online at [Fresno\\_Bakersfield@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:Fresno_Bakersfield@hsr.ca.gov). Comments may also be provided orally or in writing at the public hearings scheduled at the following times and locations:

- **Fresno, CA**, Wednesday, August 29, 2012, 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., Fresno Convention Center, Exhibit Hall III, 848 M Street, Fresno, CA
- **Hanford, CA**, Tuesday, August 28, 2012, 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., Hanford Fraternal Hall, 1015 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hanford, CA; and
- **Bakersfield, CA**, Monday, August 27, 2012, 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., Beale Memorial Library, 701 Truxton Avenue, Bakersfield, CA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. David Valenstein, Chief, Environment and Systems Planning Division, Office of Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S., Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., MS-20, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone: 202-493-6368).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed California HST system would provide intercity, high-speed passenger rail service on more than 800 miles of tracks throughout California, connecting the major population centers of Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County, and San Diego. It will use state-of-the-art, electrically powered, high-speed, steel-wheel-on-steel-rail technology, including contemporary safety, signaling, and automated train-control systems, with trains capable of operating up to 220 miles per hour (mph) over a

fully graded-separated, dedicated double track alignment. The HST System is comprised of multiple sections, one of which is the Fresno to Bakersfield Section analyzed in the Supplemental Draft EIS.

This project-level EIS tiers off of the Statewide Program EIR/EIS published by the Authority and the FRA in 2005 and builds off of subsequent decisions. The Fresno to Bakersfield Section is comprised of a 114-mile dedicated, double-track high-speed passenger rail corridor between Fresno and Bakersfield, CA. The Project includes proposed stations in downtown Fresno and Bakersfield, and a possible Kings/Tulare Regional Station in the vicinity of Hanford, CA. A heavy maintenance facility for assembly, testing, and commissioning of trains, train inspection and service, and train overhaul may be constructed in the Fresno to Bakersfield Section.

In August 2011, FRA issued a Draft EIS and circulated the document for a 60-day public and agency review and comment period. The Draft EIS analyzed a no action alternative and various action alternatives for the construction and operation of the California HST Project Fresno to Bakersfield Section, including alignment alternatives and station locations. FRA and Authority held three public hearings on the Draft EIS held in Fresno, Hanford, and Bakersfield on September 20, September 21, and September 22, 2011 respectively to collect public comments.

Based on substantive comments received during the public and agency review of the Draft EIS, the Authority and FRA decided to reintroduce alignment alternatives west of Hanford. In response to concerns raised by stakeholders in metropolitan Bakersfield, the Authority and FRA also decided to evaluate another alternative in Bakersfield (Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative) in an effort to minimize impacts to residential and

community facilities. The Authority and FRA determined that the introduction of these new alternatives and other refinements being considered for existing Fresno to Bakersfield route alternatives required preparation of a Supplemental Draft EIS under NEPA and a Revised Draft EIS under CEQA.

Consistent with the provisions of NEPA Section 102(2)(c) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500 *et seq.*), and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999), the Supplemental Draft EIS describes the Project's purpose and need, identifies the reasonable range of alternatives including the no action alternative, evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with those alternatives, and identifies mitigation measures to minimize potential environmental effects.

Copies of the Supplemental Draft EIS are available online at FRA's Web site: [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov); the Authority's Web site: [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov); and are also available for viewing at the following locations near the planned rail system:

- **Fresno County Public Library, Central Branch**, Central Reference Department, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA;
- **Fresno County Public Library, Clovis Regional Library**, 1155 Fifth Street, Clovis, CA;
- **Fresno County Public Library, Laton Branch**, 6313 DeWoody Street, Laton, CA;
- **Kern County Library, Beale Memorial Library**, 701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA;
- **Kern County Library, Corcoran Branch**, 1001 Chittenden Avenue, Corcoran, CA;
- **Kern County Library, Delano Branch**, 925 10th Avenue, Delano, CA;

- **Kern County Library, Shafter Branch**, 236 James Street, Shafter, CA;
- **Kern County Library, Wasco Branch**, 1102 7th Street, Wasco, CA;
- **Kings County Library, Hanford Branch (Main Library)**, 401 N. Douty Street, Hanford, CA;
- **Kings County Library, Lemoore Branch**, 457 C Street, Lemoore, CA;
- **Tulare County Library, Visalia Branch (Main Library)**, 200 West Oak Avenue, Visalia, CA; and
- **Tulare Public Library**, 475 North M Street, Tulare, CA.

Issued in Washington, DC, on July 19, 2012.

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Paul Nissenbaum,  
Associate Administrator for  
Railroad Policy & Development.

[FR Doc. 2012-18305 Filed 07/25/2012 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 07/26/2012]